

ABORIGINAL METHODS EMPLOYED IN KILLING AND CAPTURING GAME

BY

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(With six text figures)

Before the introduction of the fire-arm, the aboriginals were hunting in the forests of India. Their whole life being devoted to the filling of the family stomachs, it is not surprising that they invented methods of killing and catching game to supplement the efforts made with their bows and arrows, axes, and—sometimes—spears. The aboriginal kills for two reasons. The primary reason is food, for as the Ho say 'merim he merim' (meat is meat), and they are not particular as to whether this meat is furred, feathered or scaled as long as it is edible. The other reason for killing is when animals prove themselves to be a menace to the security of the aboriginal. No aboriginal kills for the sake of killing, and they can see no object in destroying an animal for the sake of sport or for its hide, head or horns. They kill, primarily, for food and food alone, much as any other carnivore, and were, before the influx of outside hunters, an important feature in the scale of the balance of nature.

The aboriginals with whom I am familiar, having lived amongst them in their villages, are the Ho, the Munda, the Urang and the Bhuiya of south Bihar and the States of Gangpur and Bonai, the Kutia Khond and the semi-hindu Oriya of Kalahandi and Jeypore Samasthanam, the Muria of Bastar and the wandering almost pigmy Bir-ho of south Bihar and northern Orissa. Their traps are described here as well as their methods of securing game. In order to attain some sequence, I am listing the animals and birds concerned, grouping several species where the trap is common, in order of classification.

MAMMALS

THE COMMON LANGUR (*Semnopithecus entellus*)

Amongst the forested hills of south Bihar and northern Orissa wander the small family parties of the Bir-ho ('Bir' meaning forest and 'Ho' meaning man), a jungle people of no fixed abode to whom the jungle is home and in which they live and die, erecting little shelters of branches or of grass as temporary shelters when the weather is wet or cold. They live on the forest life around them and their major source of sustenance is the Langur or Entellus monkey. In the tall tree forest, the langur very seldom comes to the ground but lives the major part of its life amongst the high branches. Up there in that leafy world, it has its special sleeping sites, its chosen food sites, and to and fro between these it has its well-marked travel routes, running along the same branch and jumping from the same spring take-off point to leap across and land on the same landing

point. The Bir-ho is well acquainted with the fact that these monkey-gangs tread the same familiar path to and from their sleeping places and, on moving into a section of forest, they immediately scout out the Langurs' routes, the times at which they are used, and the frequency with which the gangs travel over them. Having gleaned this information, the route is reconnoitred and a spot, usually where the monkeys leap across some gap and are bunched together on some branch, is chosen.

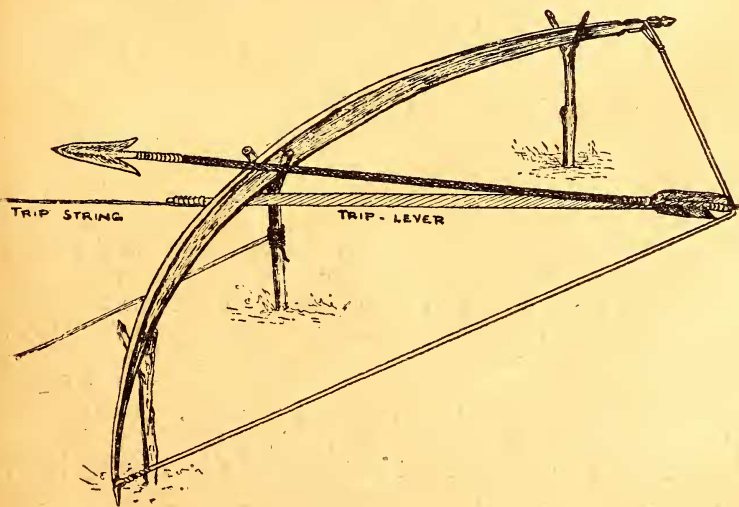
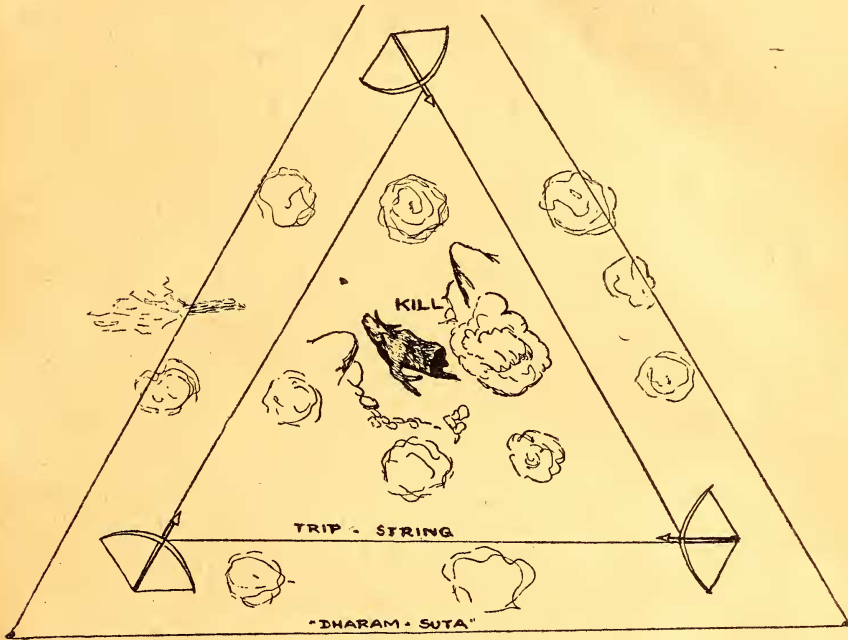
One of the hunters climbs up the tree at a time when the monkeys are furthest away from the scene and very carefully cuts through the underside of this selected branch until it is literally hanging by a thread and will be disturbed by the slightest weight. Nets woven of the bauhinia creeper are slung loosely bag-like beneath the branch and the aboriginals settle down to await the monkey-gang's arrival.

As soon as the monkeys are near, one or two small boys create an uproar behind them, causing the monkeys to run for safety and this they do, leaping across the gap bunched closer together than normal on to the weakened branch, which gives beneath their weight so that some fall into the bag-nets, others lose their balance or jump wildly elsewhere on seeing the trap their leaders have fallen into, whilst the little Bir-ho shoot at them with their arrows; their shooting is fairly accurate and I have often seen an entellus shot in mid-air. The netted monkeys are not killed until later and it is usual to kill all the adults caught but to keep the young as pets—(for consumption at some later date when food is hard to find?)

THE TIGER (*Panthera tigris*)

The tiger constitutes a grave threat to the aboriginal, especially in those areas where encroaching civilisation has caused a depletion in the deer population of the forests. In such areas the tiger falls back on the killing of cattle, and sometimes human beings, and it is usually the forest dweller who suffers. Thus, during the breeding season, in Saranda, I have known a pair of tigers kill three cattle of Baliba village on one night, two cattle of Ponga village the next, and finally five cattle near Chota Nagra village on the third night—all these villages are roughly eight to ten miles from each other in a triangle. In such cases and where a tiger is making a nuisance of itself by preying on village cattle or on human beings, the villagers usually call for the services of a professional tiger-killer or 'Bagh-mari'. This gentleman contracts to dispose of the tiger for a consideration in cash or kind. His equipment consists of three large bows, capable of propelling arrows some five to six feet in length carrying barbed heads of iron some nine to ten inches long. These bows are set in a triangle around the kill, the lane of fire of each bow being cleared, and each bow is then set for firing with a trip-string. The bows are so aligned that the arrow, which travels with considerable velocity on release, will fly about twenty inches above the level of the ground. Some ten paces back from these trip-strings, the tiger-killer strings a 'Dharam-suta' (a life-saving thread) at chest height from the ground. This latter string serves to warn any human intruder that the trap is set. The tiger, of course, passes below this string on its way to the kill and usually fouls one of the trip-strings, whereupon the arrow

is released and the tiger mortally wounded or killed outright. There have been instances where man-eaters, who have become gun-shy and who will not return to the kill after making the first meal from it, have been secured by the tiger-killer using himself as bait by sitting in the centre of his deadly triangle. Thus, in 1949, the Patharbasa man-eater in Saranda R.F. was disposed of, the fee being Rs. 300. Sketch no. 1 illustrates this type of trap.



SKETCH 1.--Tiger Trap.

Another trap, not known to the Ho, Munda, Urang (or ? Oraon), Kutia Khond or Bhuiya, is the 'Suri-phanda' used in Central India. This consists of tying the kill to a barked and slippery pole, which is lashed horizontally between two stout trees at some twelve feet above the ground. The ground below the kill slung on this pole is planted with upright spears, concealed as best possible in the grass or bushes. The tiger, on approach, sees the kill dangling out of reach and tries to secure it by climbing one of the support trees and then out along the pole, which, being both slippery and too narrow in diameter to afford a grip for the great paws, causes the tiger to miss its step, slip and fall on to the waiting spears below, its heavy weight usually inflicting a mortal wound.¹

Other methods, which I have not observed personally, but about which I have been told by the people of Erpund pargana, Bastar, are as follows:—

(a) A path frequently used by the tiger is carpeted with large Bauhinia leaves or Asan leaves, liberally smeared with bird-lime, made from pipal tree latex and mustard-oil. The tiger, walking on the path, puts his foot on a leaf, which promptly adheres to it; he struggles to shake it off and usually collects a few more leaves on his other feet and legs. He then tries to lick the leaves off and these adhere to his head until, finally, he succumbs to a terrible rage and rolls, roaring loudly, on the leaves. The waiting hunter, secure in some retreat, hears the roars, walks up and shoots the tiger with an arrow from a safe distance.

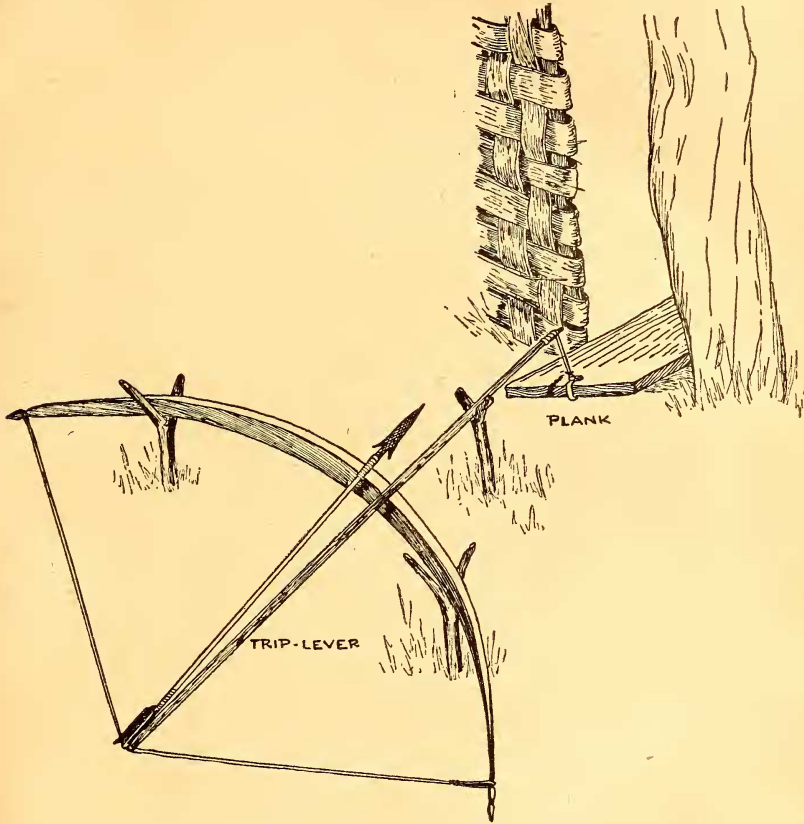
(b) Large, loosely hung nets constructed of Bauhinia creeper are slung on weakly planted bamboo poles across several paths used by the tiger around his favourite lying-up haunt. Two hunters are stationed near each net whilst beaters enter the area and make a tremendous uproar by beating drums, whacking bushes and shouting very loudly. The upshot of this is that the tiger decides to leave the area in a hurry and runs into one of the nets, the weak bamboos collapse and the net enmeshes the struggling tiger, which is then disposed of by the sentries. I have seen these nets, which are also used in securing deer, but I have never witnessed a hunt in action.

THE LEOPARD, OR PANTHER (*Panthera pardus*)

The panther probably constitutes the greatest menace or nuisance to the aboriginal. Virtually every village in or near the forest is haunted by one or more of these beasts, which prey on cattle, goats and dogs and sometimes become man-eaters. Their great cunning combined with their familiarity with man makes them all the more dangerous, and the aboriginal is only too glad to dispose of them but usually does not do so until they have become an extreme nuisance. The south Bihar-northern Orissa tribes usually employ a bow-trap, illustrated in sketch no. 2, which is fairly satisfactory. A bow is tied to two small 'Y' stakes facing the narrowly opened gate in a fence, through which the panther has been observed to move. Another 'Y' stake is planted in front of the bow and this supports a piece of bamboo, one end of which is rounded and holds the bow string back,

¹ For further details of this method, see Davar, *JBNHS*, Vol. 49, p. 52.—Eds.

a small notch in this bamboo holds against the supporting 'Y' stake's fork when the pressure of the bow-string forces it forward. From the other end of the bamboo, a short string holds up one end of a small plank, which is placed directly in the open gate-way. The whole trap is set with great care and the bamboo is virtually a hair-trigger



SKETCH 2.—Panther Trap.

for the slightest pressure on the plank causes the bamboo to jump up and release the bow string, propelling the arrow forward with great velocity. The bow is so set that the arrow flies diagonally upwards. The marauding panther usually tries to sneak through the gate, treads on the plank and releases the arrow, which strikes it in the chest or head inflicting a terrible wound or killing the animal completely. This trap is very common amongst the Urang.

The Muria of Bastar and some of the villages in Orissa use a regular trap with a trap-door. The trap is a two-compartment affair, built of stout stakes hammered well into the ground and roofed with heavy timbers. A partition of thinner stakes divides the two compartments. A heavy trap-door is poised above the entrance to the trap, held in place by a rope tied to a narrow stake against the partition. A pig is placed in the smaller of the two compartments. The panther,

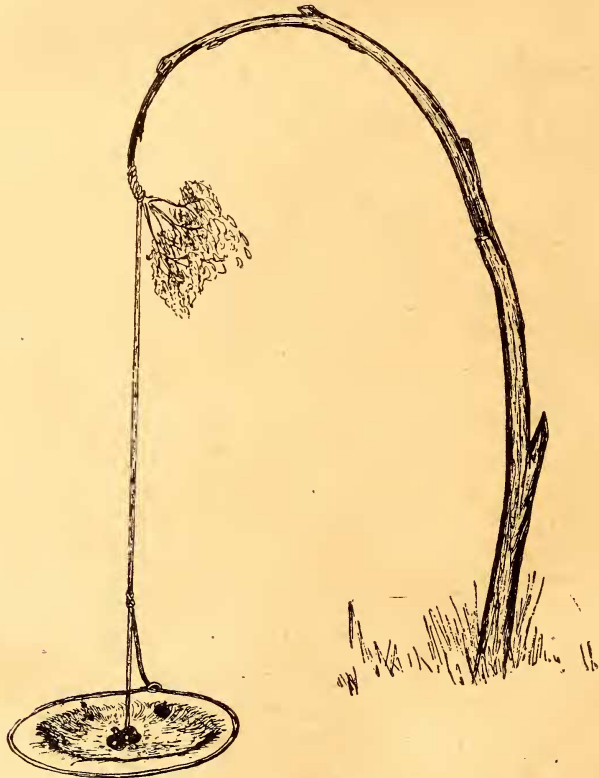
in an effort to secure the pig, enters the trap and its scratchings against the partition disturbs the key-stake holding the rope and the trap-door is released to trap the panther. It should be pointed out that the trap is so narrow as to make it impossible for the panther to turn around and attack the baulk of timber that serves as a door. The panther is then disposed of with an arrow through the gaps in the stakes.

THE LEOPARD CAT (*Prionailurus bengalensis*)

THE JUNGLE CAT (*Felis chaus*)

THE INDIAN FOX (*Vulpes bengalensis*)

These three animals, especially the latter two, can be extremely harmful to poultry and—in the case of the two cats—are not averse to destroying goat kids and lambs, whilst the little fox occasionally wreaks havoc in the melon patches and the yam fields. All three are trapped with the spring trap shown in sketch no. 3. This is a very simple



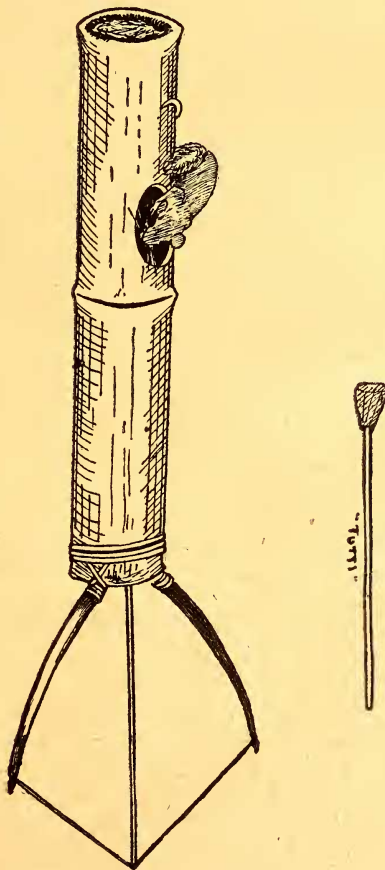
SKETCH 3.—Spring Trap used for wild cats, foxes, hares and peafowl.

trap and consists of bending a springy bamboo or young sapling over. A string ending in a noose is attached to the bamboo and a second string attached to a stake driven lightly into the ground serves to hold the bamboo bent over. A piece of meat or the intestines

of a chicken are firmly lashed to this stake, which is planted in a hollow about four to six inches deep, the noose being laid around the hollow's circumference. The predator, in trying to dislodge the meat, loosens the stake, the bamboo flies back to its normal upright position with the release of tension, and the animal is noosed around the neck or upper body. The bamboo selected is usually about twelve feet tall and the noose-string is about five feet long so that an animal so suspended cannot touch the ground and is usually choked or hangs in mid-air until the trapper destroys it. The Junglecat is eaten as a delicacy by some tribes, especially the Urang.

RATS

All aboriginal tribes mentioned in the introduction eat the field rats which live in their fields and houses. Several traps are used including the spring trap referred to above as well as 'figure four' traps holding up a baulk of timber, which crushes the rat with its weight when released. The Urang have a novel trap, illustrated in sketch number 4, which consists of a hollow bamboo, with an entrance



SKETCH 4.—Urang rat trap.

hole cut into one side. A small bow holding a 'tuti' or blunt-headed arrow is fixed to the open end of the bamboo and the bow-string is held taut by a bamboo splinter, wedged against a node in the bamboo's hollow interior. A morsel of food is fixed to one end of this splinter, the other end being used against the bow string. The rat enters the bamboo in quest of food and dislodges the splinter, whereupon the arrow is released and the rat killed.

THE INDIAN PORCUPINE (*Hystrix leucura*)

The porcupine is trapped as food or when its destructive inroads into garden produce become intense. Usually the porcupine forces a way through a hedge or tunnels through a bund in order to enter a garden and uses this entry regularly thereafter, and this is its undoing for the aboriginal poises a heavy timber on a delicate figure four in the field just over the tunnel's mouth, the porcupine disturbs the figure four and the timber crushes it. Where there is a scarcity of convenient hedges or fences around gardens, the aboriginal usually erects a narrow box-trap, not unlike the panther trap, and this he baits with some succulent vegetable, usually yams or sweet potatoes, allowing the porcupine to visit the trap for several nights until its suspicions have worn off and it has become a regular nocturnal visitor. The trap is then set with the same heavy timber and figure four as used in hedge-tunnels and the porcupine is crushed. Sometimes, though very seldom, a trap door is employed.

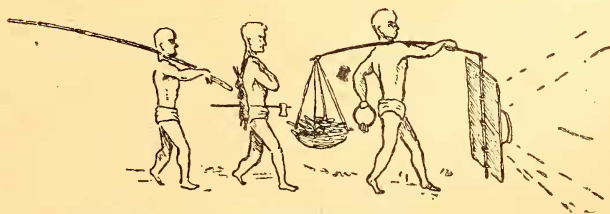
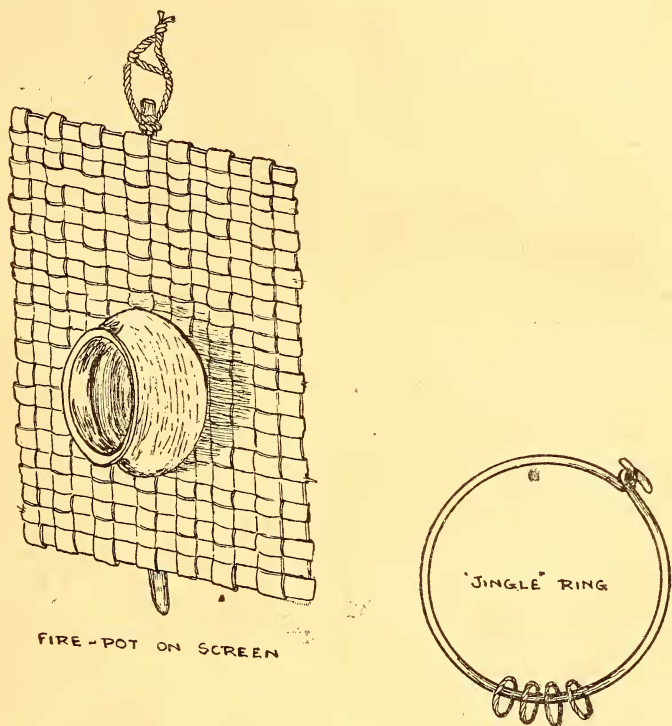
THE COMMON HARE (*Lepus ruficaudatus*)

Much sought after by the aboriginal as food, the hare is widely trapped and killed. Several methods are employed. The first is based directly on the hare's habit of running through gaps between bushes, no matter how low these may be, rather than jump over the bushes when flushed. Accordingly, the trapper erects a long low barrier of cut branches in the shape of a large 'V', at the apex of which and at intervals along the arms of which he leaves several small gaps. Each of these gaps is covered with a loose net, the ends of which are firmly pegged to the ground and the hunters then beat the surrounding scrub driving the hares towards the 'V', which they enter, run down the arms in panic diving for any gap, where they are promptly fouled by the net and taken. This is an extremely effective trap and I have yet to see one draw a blank.

The second trap employed is a spring trap as described under the Cats and the Indian Fox, only no shallow pit is dug but grain and rice are sprinkled in the centre of the noose and the hare disturbs the key-stake whilst eating, thus noosing itself.

The third and very successful method of killing hares is the village version of shooting from motor cars at night with the aid of bright headlights. For some reason best known to itself, the hare is scared by a bright light, and the Oriyas of Kalahandi have developed a novel method of hare-hunting, which I have never witnessed elsewhere. An earthen pot with a wide mouth is daubed with white clay and affixed to a woven bamboo screen about three feet wide and four feet high in such a manner that the pot's mouth is facing away from the screen horizontally. This contraption is attached to one end of a 'Kaur' or shoulder pole, as used for carrying loads, and is counter-

balanced by a basket filled with small chips of timber at the other end of the 'Kaur'. A fire is made in the pot and the load is shouldered by the chief hunter, who moves rapidly across the fields and open glades, swinging the light from the pot about much in the manner of a searchlight. In his hand he carries a large iron ring, some ten inches in diameter, on which are hung some three to four small rings of plaited wire. As he swings his torch here and there he jingles these rings continuously. Behind him walks a general factotum, whose job it is to keep the fire replenished and, later, to carry the bag, whilst behind him again walks the killer, a man armed with a long bamboo pole. All three are very careful to keep directly in the shade of the bamboo screen and so throw no shadows of their own from the firelight. I have tried to illustrate this in sketch no. 5.



SKETCH 5.—Oriyas hunting hare.

The jingling of the wire rings apparently attracts the attention of the hares, which look up and are frozen with fear (I surmise it is fear) at the sight of the great glowing 'eye' bearing down on them, their attention being totally held by a very rapid jingling of the wires. The whole party moves rapidly towards the petrified animal until they are within range, when the killer deals the unfortunate beast a deadly blow with his long bamboo. I have been out on these hunts on several occasions. The hunt is always on very dark nights, before the falling of the first dew, and it is always highly successful. However, if one is careless and allows the firelight to throw the shadows of legs or arms across the ground, the hares immediately forget their trance and make a bolt for it, being vigorously pursued with a rapid jingling until they stop and are again hypnotised. The villagers have told me that, on occasion, cheetal deer, and once, a panther have been similarly attracted. In the case of the panther, the chief hunter very carefully placed his load on the ground, the hunters faded into the night and watched the panther stalk the fire-pot, upon which it leaped with a roar that quickly changed to an anguished scream as it burnt itself. This incident was considered extremely humorous and was narrated with much delighted thigh-slapping and guffaws.

THE INDIAN ELEPHANT (*Elephas maximus*)

In parts of southern Bihar and northern Orissa the elephant causes immense damage to the fields. The Elephant Protection Act prohibiting the killing of elephants has led to a situation where the elephant has become so familiar with man as to be contemptuous of him, entering his fields and villages with impunity to eat its fill. It is heart-rending to see a small field of paddy that has been worked over by an elephant and yet there is little one can do about it and the aboriginal is usually content to dig a pit, severely thrashing the elephant that falls into it, after which the elephant is left to climb out as best it can. In the old days, these pits were planted with sharpened stakes or spears but this habit has died out due to fear of the law.

THE INDIAN CHEVROTAIN OR MOUSE-DEER (*Moschiola memina*)

Strangely enough, although deer meat is looked upon with fondness by all aboriginals, in fact the Ho word 'merim' is used for both 'meat' and 'deer'—I suppose because the Ho looks upon all deer as being nothing but meat in an active form—I know of no true traps, apart from the nets referred to under the paragraph on tigers, which, as I have said, I have never seen in use. Most aboriginals are content to stalk deer or beat them to a waiting line of hunters armed with bows or sometimes, as in Orissa, with flintlocks of great vintage or, at most, to ambush them over their regular dung-heaps. However, the mouse-deer is trapped, in one sense of the word, by two simple methods, one of which is rather strenuous.

In the jungle, the mouse-deer usually lairs up inside a hollow fallen tree during the day. The aboriginal who discovers such a lair promptly takes off his loin cloth, or, if he has no loin cloth, goes home and fetches a piece of cloth, which is draped over the

entrance of the hollow log, which is usually solid for some part of its length. Having covered the entrance as best he can, he commences hammering on the log, proceeding from the entrance up, with the butt of his axe, until the sound tells him he has reached the end of the hollow portion of the log. He then cuts a large hole about two feet away from this solid part, puts in his arm and catches the deer. It is as easy as that because, for some unknown reason, the deer will not attempt to run past the flimsy cloth covering its escape route, whilst the continuous hammering and cutting, the noise of which must be amplified to excess in the confines of the hollow log, send it in retreat as far back as it can get, where it remains apparently dazed by the sound, for it makes no attempt to struggle when caught or at the most will give a couple of ineffective kicks.

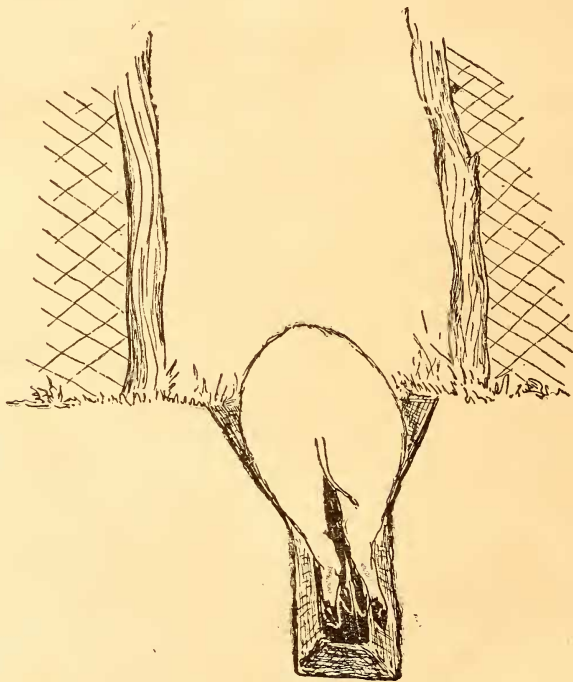
The second method is employed during the summer months, when the carpet of dry leaves on the forest floor is thick and piled into drifts. The hunter, knowing the path used by this little deer, conceals himself nearby and, on the arrival of the deer, throws himself into sudden and violent pursuit. The alarmed little animal plunges off the path and, in trying to run through the drifts of dry leaves, punctures them with its sharp hooves so that they accumulate like large anklets around its legs, slowing it down and sometimes stopping it completely, so that the hunter, albeit a trifle puffed by his exertions for these little deer are capable of great speed, successfully captures it. The only parallel with this that I have on other species of deer is when I was invited to hunt sambar by a band of Kutia Khonds in northern Jeypore Samasthanam. I visualised myself sitting on some shady forest-line whilst the beaters worked the deer towards me, and set off in high spirits which quickly waned when I discovered that the Kutia Khond method of hunting sambar is very simple. One simply finds a sambar and runs behind it until it cannot run any more. In this case, I ran from nine in the morning to noon, when finding myself conveniently near my camp I retired modestly. The sambar was brought in that evening. It was explained to me that when the sambar is too tired to run it stands at bay and a member of the hunting party then unslings his axe, walks up to the sambar, grabbing its sweeping antlers with one hand as it swings at him, pushes the head down and delivers the *coup de grâce* with the other hand with a single stroke of the axe. It is a sport I would recommend to those gentlemen of England who derive pleasure from pursuing on horseback a released deer, across someone else's fields with a pack of baying hounds. I think the Khond's method is more sportsmanlike and far more energetic. However, that is a totally different story.

Reverting to mouse-deer, the Saranda Ho tell me that it is also secured in the breeding season—before the monsoon—at least the males are, by the following method. Two hunters go into deep forest and conceal themselves behind some chosen bush. One of the pair then rattles on a large dry leaf with a pair of twigs. This rattling is brisk and staccato and is made in small bursts. Apparently it is the male mouse-deer's challenge to a rival or it may be the means of the female on heat calling any interested males. At any rate, in a short while, there is an answering rattle that comes nearer and nearer until, finally, a male mouse-deer in a fine temper, stalks into sight

and is promptly despatched by the second hunter's arrow. I have tried this without success, but it is very probably a correct tale as the Ho does not lie about the forest. It shows an amazingly keen observation of the animal's habits by the aborigines concerned.

THE INDIAN WILD BOAR (*Sus cristatus*)

This great pest and raider of fields is also relished as a great delicacy by all the aborigines amongst whom I have had the pleasure to live. However, although adept at ambushing pigs at their summer wallows, in their monsoon 'nests', and by the direct beating them out of cover or shooting at them from grass shelters in the fields, no aborigines except the Ho have developed a trap for these beasts. Yet the Ho trap is extremely effective. I illustrate it in sketch no. 6. A field is fenced off and several gaps are left in the



SKETCH 6.—Ho trap for wild pig.

fencing. The pigs coming out of the forest at night become accustomed to entering and leaving the field through these gaps and they are allowed to do so without molestation for a few nights. Several of the gaps are then temporarily closed so that, after a few days, the pigs now become used to entering the field through the remaining openings. The temporarily closed gaps are then opened and a 'Y' shaped (in cross section) ditch is dug in each gap, which it should have been explained earlier is just wide enough to allow the passage of a single pig. These ditches are some four feet deep, the upper 'V' section is about 2 feet across and the narrow lower section is

about twelve inches across and some two feet deep. The ditch is lightly covered with branches and earth. That night, the pigs enter the field by the gaps which had never been closed and, once they are well into the field and busy foraging, a sudden shout sends them scurrying to safety, and several of them head for the old remembered gaps and there fall into the ditches. Their legs fall into the narrow lower section, where they dangle without touching bottom whilst the weight of their bodies wedges into the upper 'V' section and keeps their legs jammed down uselessly despite all struggling. They are then despatched speedily with heavy clubs.

BIRDS

Although the aboriginal will eat any bird, most of the tribes trap various game birds fairly regularly for the sake of food. I have known Oriya sawyers at Belgarh to enjoy a delicious stew of *Milvus migrans*; Urang youth eat young *Corvus splendens* with relish; Khonds eat *Athene brama* and my Munda bearer could think of nothing tastier than curried callow Green Barbet.

DOVES AND PIGEONS

Nooses made of horse-hair and attached to lengths of fibre rope are spread in the stubble of paddy fields, in which large numbers of doves and pigeons flock to glean in the evenings. This type of snare is common throughout India; so I have no need to describe it in any detail, merely remarking that species I have trapped or seen trapped by the use of these snares are Blue Rock Pigeons (*Columba livia*), Rufous Turtle Doves (*Streptopelia orientalis*), Spotted Doves (*S. chinensis*), Little Brown Doves (*S. senegalensis*), Indian Ring Doves (*S. risoria*) and, once, the Emerald Dove (*Chalcophaps indica*) in Ponga, Saranda R.F.

THE COMMON PEAFOWL (*Pavo cristatus*)

The Peafowl, although sacred in many parts of India, is greatly sought after by the aboriginal tribes so that, in their territories, it is an extremely shy and wary bird. It is snared by nooses across its favourite paths, usually where these enter cultivation on the forest fringe, or it is snared with a spring trap similar to that employed for hares. There are several other methods, however, which are worthy of note. The Urang usually catch it by threading together, on stout twine, several grains of gram. This string of gram is laid in a straight line near other strewn gram and a single bird will usually pick these grains up, swallowing them in quick succession. Since the other end of the string is firmly lashed to a stake or to a bush, the bird finds itself anchored and is thus caught.

The Ho make a very cruel and powerful trap by selecting a young and springy sapling with a fork some eight or ten feet high. This sapling is twisted several times and then bent over so that the prongs of the fork are on the ground. A stake delicately holds the fork down and the area directly beneath the fork is strewn with grain, half buried in the earth. The peafowl, coming across this grain commences pecking and scratching, which latter action disturbs the

stake, the sapling immediately jumps up, lifting the peafowl in the fork, and as the sapling violently untwists itself the peafowl is beaten severely on the ground and whirled around in the air, usually with such force that its neck is broken. The violence of the sapling's untwistings combined with the sudden lift is strong enough to lift an average man off his feet and probably break a leg at the same time.

The Oriya plays on the bird's curiosity. When the mhowa is falling, trains of peafowl congregate beneath the mhowa trees to glean the fallen flowers. The Oriya hunter builds a grass lean-to against the bole of such a tree and conceals himself behind it with a leopard skin. The lean-to wall is so constructed that anyone on the outside can dimly see someone inside and this building has an important role in the hunt that follows. Towards the evening, the peafowl emerge and commence picking the fallen flowers. When they are thus busily engaged, the hunter gently rustles the leopard skin against the grass wall of his lean-to, attracting the attention of the peafowl. One would expect them to run away but a most curious thing happens. The panther is an enemy of the peafowl, who always alert to danger keep a sharp eye open for these pests. They hear the rustling under the tree, look up and there is a panther in the grass lean-to. They can see it dimly; it may or may not be a panther and, in order to discover whether it is or not, the silly birds—at other times so cunning and so clever—erect their necks the better to see over the grass, stand very erect exposing the chest to the hunter and commence to walk, almost on tip-toe, toward the hide, all the time making a low 'kok-kok-kok' sound. When they are near enough, a rustle from the hide freezes them for a second and, in that second, the hunter shoots one with an arrow. It flutters about and the others prepare to flee, but a rustle from the hide and a glimpse of that hated spotted coat attracts their attention again like a magnet and the performance is repeated, until the remnant of the train finally decide to call it a day and take flight.

This method of hunting is clever in that the Oriya has learned of the bird's great curiosity in identifying an arch-enemy and has used this lesson to secure the bird easily.

THE RED JUNGLEFOWL (*Gallus gallus*)

The Junglefowl is also a regular item on the menu of aboriginal tribes. It is secured, when gleaning in paddy stubbles with the aid of horse-hair nooses and is sometimes snared as are the peafowl by the Urang and the Ho. However, the commonest method of snaring it is by means of a decoy. A captive bird is usually staked out in the jungle and surrounded by a ring of horse-hair nooses. It commences to crow lustily thus attracting the attention of the nearest wild cock, which, rushing down to do combat, is caught in a noose. If the aboriginal who does not possess a decoy cock wishes to snare one for himself, he will conceal himself beneath a bush, ring himself in with snares, and commence crowing lustily himself with the same result as a decoy cock produces. Even a passable imitation of the crow will suffice, and I have called cocks to the gun this way by merely clapping my hands—a necessary action to simulate the flapping of

wings before crowing—and then crowing loudly. The challenge will be immediately answered, and before long a junglecock will make his appearance to do battle.

QUAIL

In southern Bihar, the migratory Common Quail (*Coturnix coturnix*) occurs in great numbers during the winter and is netted in fair quantity. The method of netting is that a low finely meshed net is pegged out over a fairly large area in the stubble of paddy fields. The net is pegged down all round its circumference except at one side where it is propped open and held about ten inches above ground by a series of small sticks joined together with a string, the end of which is payed out into the field. When a flock of quail settle in the field, the trapper, draped in a white sheet and bearing two branches slowly enters the far side of the field bent double. This queer stance and paraphernalia are supposed to represent a cow grazing and, though it may seem ludicrous to human eyes, the quails accept the figure as a cow and are not unduly disturbed. This 'cow' then commences 'grazing' and slowly traverses up and down the field parallel to the net. As it goes to and fro, it comes, closer to the quail, who move away from it so as not to be stamped under by some clumsy foot and so the little drama continues until the quail are beneath the net. Then with a wild shout, the 'cow' pulls the release string dropping the open side of the net and traps the unfortunate quail.

I have sometimes seen *Coturnix coromandelicus* in these catches but it is mostly *Coturnix coturnix* who is the greater sufferer.

THE STONE CURLEW (*Burhinus œdicnemus*)

Living in the more open scrub on the fringe of cultivation, the Stone Curlew falls victim to the Murias of Bastar because it will not cross a mound of ashes. Why it should not do so is not known as it will gladly jump over a line of boulders; it will run over a bund of earth but it draws the line at ashes. It simply will not walk over them or jump over them but must walk around them or in a gap between two ridges of ashes. Thus, the Muria, taking advantage of this weakness, builds a ridge across some favourite path of the plover and leaves a gap through which it may walk. The only snag is that Muria also places a noose of horse-hair in this gap and the plover, treading like Agag delicately, walks straight into the noose and is snared. I can attribute no reason for this behaviour and I often wonder as to which Muria was so observant as to learn of this strange weakness on the part of the bird.

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Finally, I have not mentioned two methods of capturing animals and birds, both of which are destructive and harmful. The first is the use of bird-lime spread on bared branches or smeared on a broom of twigs which is dropped on the birds. Bird-lime usually snares birds which cannot be considered as 'game' by any stretch of the imagination, and the use of it should be stopped as far as possible.

The other more serious trap is the artificial salt-lick. If you visit Kalahandi, Jeypore and parts of Ganjam, you will run across the

artificial salt-lick with alarming frequency once you have won the confidence of the villagers. These licks are made by 'salting' a hollow with human urine over a considerable period of time, the lick being covered over with large boulders so that the animals, attracted to it by the smell, cannot use it until it is adjudged as 'ripe'—this is usually arrived at when it is seen that animals are trying to use the lick in large numbers and with high frequency. The lick is then uncovered and a convenient hide built close to it, and from this hide the 'salter' huntsman usually wreaks havoc amongst the deer and pig that come down to the lick, sparing neither doe nor fawn nor observing close season.

I hear that there is a Sportsmen's Association or something of that sort in Orissa formed by sportsmen and shikaris in that State, and it is hoped that they will take steps to see that the artificial licks are made illegal as soon as possible.